

Who We Are

The Department of Child Support Services provides services to parents, guardians, and caretakers of minor children. Our services are available regardless of marital status.

What We Do

- Establish paternity
- Establish child and medical support orders
- Enforce/modify child and medical support orders
- Collect and distribute child and spousal support payments



Financial support and parental involvement determine what a child has, what that child can do, and who that child could become.

This pamphlet gives information about the general procedures of the County of San Diego Department of Child Support Services, and should be used for informational purposes only.

You have the option to consult an attorney. The Department of Child Support Services does not offer legal representation or give legal advice.



"Enhance the lives and well-being of children and promote family self-sufficiency by establishing and enforcing support orders."

County of San Diego
Department of Child Support Services

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Supporting California's Children

Information for the Noncustodial Parent



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Department of
Child Support Services

Who is the noncustodial parent?

A noncustodial parent is the parent without primary physical custody of the child(ren). The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) recognizes that this term sometimes causes concern especially when a “noncustodial parent” is actively involved, personally and financially, in his/her child(ren)’s life.

The DCSS only uses this term to distinguish the payor of child support from the recipient.

Why do I have a case?

A case is opened for any parent, caretaker or guardian who requests child support services. If the child(ren) receives public assistance, a case is opened automatically.

What should I expect?

If there is no existing child support order, you will be served with legal documents concerning your case. If fatherhood is in question, genetic testing is available at the DCSS’s office.

Once paternity has been resolved, a child support order may be obtained through a judicial process. The amount of support is calculated according to state guidelines that consider each parent’s income and other factors, such as the amount of time each parent spends with the child(ren) and any special needs of the child(ren).

You will be required to pay child support through the DCSS as long as your case is open. Your employer will be obligated to withhold support payments from your wages, as required by law.

Do I have to go to court?

You have the right to a court hearing. However, you may be able to settle your case out of court by meeting with a case manager at the DCSS.

What if I don’t agree that I am the father?

As soon as you are served with a legal document that says you are the father of a child, contact the DCSS and/or file your response to the legal document within 30 days. You have only 30 days to arrange for no-cost genetic testing.

If you ignore this document or wait beyond the 30 days, the court **will** establish you as the legal father by default. You may be required to pay child support in an amount set by the court as well as provide medical support.

What if I don’t agree with the amount?

The DCSS welcomes the opportunity to review any information you can provide that will affect your order.



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*More information for
noncustodial parents is
available in a video series at
www.sandiegochildsupport.org.*
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What happens if I don’t pay?

Failure to pay court-ordered support has serious consequences:

- Interest will be charged on your unpaid balance
- Driver’s and professional licenses can be suspended
- Tax refunds can be intercepted
- Liens are placed on your real property
- Unpaid support is reported to credit bureaus
- Passports can be denied

What are my responsibilities?

Carefully read all paperwork that is sent to you.

Contact DCSS if you have any questions or concerns. You may want to talk to a private attorney.

Pay your support in full and on time. Keep accurate records of all payments and visitation. If you pay by cash, insist on a receipt. This will help if you have a dispute or a question concerning your case.

Notify DCSS of any change in circumstances that could affect your case, such as:

- Custody and visitation
- Income and employment
- Health insurance coverage
- Workers’ compensation
- Disability status
- Address
- Marital status
- Changes to your family size
- Incarceration

Providing this information may benefit you and could affect the amount you are ordered to pay.

The Department of Child Support Services does not represent either party.